

# The Hymn

OCTOBER 1959



THOMAS HASTINGS  
1784-1872

# The President's Message

## A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

It was my pleasant privilege to participate in the Nineteenth Annual Southern Baptist Music Leadership Conference held at Ridgecrest near Asheville, North Carolina, during the last week of June. This took me to familiar territory, for Ridgecrest is in the vicinity of the Southern Presbyterian Assembly Grounds at Montreat and the Methodist Assembly Grounds at Lake Junaluska, at both of which I had participated in programs in previous years.

Before I went to Ridgecrest, a friend in the South, not a Baptist, said, "You will have a memorable experience." And so I did. It was thrilling to see three thousand people, young and old, gathered to be trained in sacred music and to express their faith in song. How they did sing! I sometimes wondered if the roof of the auditorium would stay in place! It will be of interest to Hymn Society members to know the list of hymns which were sung at the opening session by the congregation which packed the huge auditorium. As I recall, we began with "All hail the power of Jesus' name" to the stirring tune DIADEM. Then came St. Francis' "All creatures of our God and King;" Babcock's "This is my Father's world;" Fosdick's "God of grace and God of glory" to CWM RHONDDA; and Blanchard's "Word of God, across the ages." It was particularly gratifying to have this last which is one of the new Bible Hymns of the Society. All these hymns were in the new Baptist Hymnal which was used throughout the Conference. At other sessions in the auditorium similar hymns were sung and various Gospel hymns as well.

Another impressive feature of the Conference was the presence of seven hundred young people most of whom were members of choirs in their home churches. Here they were for the training and fellowship of the Conference. I was also impressed with the clever procedures by which young children were introduced to sacred music.

I found the most cordial attitude toward The Hymn Society; and deeply appreciated the constant interest of the leaders in bringing the Society to the attention of the Conference. I led a general class on "Christian Hymnody," and had two special sessions with two to three hundred choir directors on "Current Trends in American Hymnody" and "The Future of Christian Hymnody." I also spoke briefly about The Hymn Society to the whole Conference in the auditorium.

*(continued on page 114)*



# The Hymn

Published by The Hymn Society of America, New York

Volume 10

October, 1959

Number 4

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## CONTENTS

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE .....	102
THOMAS HASTINGS, 1784-1872 .....	105
<i>Lee Hastings Bristol, Jr.</i>	
"NONUMQUE PREMATUR IN ANNUM" .....	111
<i>Armin Haeussler</i>	
A SANE APPROACH TO THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN'S CHOIRS .....	115
<i>Morgan Simmons</i>	
A HYMN MEMORY PLAN .....	118
<i>Ruth E. Marsden</i>	
HYMN, "THE GOD OF GRACE BE BLESSED" .....	104
<i>John Underwood Stephens</i>	
HYMN, "THOU SON OF GOD, WHOSE LOVE SUSTAINS" .....	117
<i>Morgan Simmons</i>	
HYMN TUNE, OGUNQUIT .....	104
<i>Seth Bingham</i>	
CHRISTMAS RECORDINGS .....	123
<i>James Boeringer</i>	
THE HYMN REPORTER .....	128
REVIEWS .....	125
INDEX, THE HYMN, Vol. 10 .....	131

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THE HYMN is a quarterly published in January, April, July and October by The Hymn Society of America, Inc.

Membership in The Hymn Society of America, including the *Papers* of the Society and copies of THE HYMN, \$3.00 yearly (accredited student members, \$1.50).

All correspondence concerning membership, literature of the society, or change of address should be directed to The Hymn Society of America, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, New York.

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Printed in The United States of America.

# The God of Grace

OGUNQUIT 6.6.6.6.8.8

John Underwood Stephens, 1953

Seth Bingham, 1952

*May be sung in unison*

1. The God of grace be blessed! So hum-bly drew He near  
 2. Our might-y God be praised And be His Name a - dored!  
 3. Thanks-giv-ing ren-der God! He free-dom gives from chains  
 4. To God the on-ly wise Glo-ry and hon-or yield!

By all our woes op-pressed, Love put to flight our fear:  
 From death's dark hold He raised Our ev-er liv-ing Lord,  
 When in our dust-y clod Christ's Ho-ly Spi-rit reigns:  
 Be-neath His heal-ing eyes His chil-dren He will shield

No force be-low, no power a-bove, Can  
 Who, tramp-ling un-der foot the night, Brought  
 Hence-forth no more in vain we strive; In  
 And ev-'ry hurt-ful thing de-stroy, To

bar our hearts a- gainst God's love.  
 im-mor-tal-i-ty to light.  
 Christ shall all be made a-live.  
 bring us fault-less home with joy. A - men.

\*Optional

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# Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872

LEE HASTINGS BRISTOL, JR.

**T**O HAVE WRITTEN 600 HYMNS, composed about 1,000 tunes, produced more than 50 books, written countless articles, and to have devoted 66 years to choir work would be a remarkable achievement in any man. It is all the more remarkable in the case of Dr. Thomas Hastings who overcame handicaps which would have daunted many another man.

Thomas Hastings—who was born 175 years ago this month—was an albino, tragically nearsighted, and had a speech impediment which he later overcame. Although he is well-known as the composer of the familiar tune *TOPLADY* to “Rock of Ages,” few of us today are conscious of the great influence he had on the church music of his day. Writing in 1925, Frank J. Metcalf said, “To him and Lowell Mason is due a larger proportion of the psalm-tunes of American origin now in common use among Protestant peoples than to any other two men.”<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Hastings was born in Washington, Connecticut, October 15, 1784, the third of eleven children born to Dr. Seth Hastings, a physician and farmer, and his wife Eunice Parmele. Thomas was twelve years old when the family moved by sleigh and ox-sled to the near-wilderness of Oneida County, New York, to what is now the village of Clinton.

Indians were still in the neighborhood. The cultivated fields were only partially cleared of logs and trees. Thick woods virtually hid what houses there were. The long days were full of hard work for the Clinton settlers—felling trees, clearing out underbrush, sawing wood, ripping out tree stumps. Winters were severe, but even in summertime Dr. Seth Hastings found the roads almost impassable as he tried to make his professional rounds.

From the start, young Thomas was surrounded by religion and music. His father, Dr. Hastings, was deeply religious. Before me as I write are a number of fragments from his diaries. Written in his small, clear handwriting, these notes are full of scriptural references from both the Old and New Testaments.

As a thank offering to God, Dr. Hastings drew up a Family Covenant which the children ultimately signed. In it he said: “I would recommend to my children to set apart some portion of the first Sabbath evening of every month, between the hours of eight and eleven o’clock, for a season of special prayer to the Father of mercies. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

Thomas grew up in a religious home and appears to have been surrounded by music. Family records show that Dr. Seth Hastings



"must have been fond of music, for all his children were early taught to sing, and the memory of all the family gatherings at Thanksgiving time, the one great holiday of the year, was one cherished by his sons and daughters. There are many stories of the fun and frolics which those children enjoyed in their home life. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Thomas began his study of music with a sixpenny gamut of four pages. This was followed by the slow and diligent mastering of an elaborate treatise on music which his brother bought him at an auction. With this background and only his experience as a chorister in the village choir he applied without success for a teaching job in a number of nearby communities. The following year, however, in 1806 he was hired to teach at Bridgewater in Oneida and at Brookfield in Herkimer. The career in music was begun.

Singing schools in those days were run poorly. Instruction was often inaccurate, and good taste, like discipline, did not exist. Thomas was a determined reformer from the start. He was a strict disciplinarian, shortened the recess periods, insisted on quiet during the class sessions. Having the white hair of an albino, Thomas no doubt seemed to his students to be far older than he actually was.

"He was nearsighted and when directing his classes, his head was bowed down close to the book and moved across the page as his eyes followed the music. In spite of this defect, he was able to direct with the book either side up and when practicing with his brothers he would sometimes stand in front of them and follow from over the back of the book."<sup>4</sup>

Thomas joined the Handel and Haydn Society of Oneida County in 1816. Because he felt there was a real need for more music, he put together a pamphlet with Professor Norton of Hamilton College called *Musica Sacra*, which they later enlarged and combined with Colonel Warriner's *Springfield Collection*. With the publication of his *Utica Collection* in 1816 Thomas Hastings went on to publish a book of songs almost every year.

He had mastered the impediment in his speech and become well-known and much in demand as a speaker. In addition, he had now begun to write articles on the subject of church music. As his reputation continued to grow, he was invited to go first to Troy and later to Albany to train choirs there. In 1822 he married Mary Seymour, and it was in that same year that his book, *A Dissertation on Musical Taste* was first published.

In that book, Mr. Hastings made clear his views on church music. Said he: "It should be plain, but not insipid; simple, yet chaste and

beautiful; always impressive, yet free from the appearance of labor or affectation."

While he makes clear his strong feeling that church music ought properly to be subordinated in worship, he points out that it should beautify religious experience and make a service more expressive. If the music is "really unimpressive in its influence," says he, "it ceases to be music."<sup>5</sup>

Although his views seem dated to us today, one must remember how great an influence he exercised in raising the standards of church music from what they had been.

In 1823 he returned to Oneida County, this time to Utica to serve as editor for the next nine years of *The Western Recorder*, a new religious journal which gave him a fine channel through which to air his views on music.

In 1832 he was invited to meet with twelve churches in New York City which were interested in undertaking a joint experiment aimed at improving church music standards in the city. The meeting was held on a Sunday evening, and Thomas Hastings was asked to express his views.

Describing the scene later, he reported, "After a clumsy sentence or two, words came apace, ideas flowed. . . . I spoke of the true manner and spirit of praise, of the prevailing abuses in psalmody, of Christian obligation in regard to the subject, and of the necessity of a radical reform, with the manner in which it ought to be conducted, and of the blessings which would result through faithfulness in the enterprise."<sup>6</sup>

When Mr. Hastings returned to his seat, the pastor whispered to him, "You have got to come here! The case is decided."

After he sold his interest in the *Recorder*, he and Mrs. Hastings moved to New York where he began his work with the twelve choirs. He attended services at the various churches, studied what was wrong with the present choir training procedures and the music used.

Said he, "Existing volunteer choirs were to be thoroughly drilled, new ones constituted, while the congregations at large were to receive instruction. Two or three churches were combined in each evening's labors. Afternoons at one central place were devoted to instruction in the rudiments of notation. These were open to all the city, and thousands of the population attended. These gained sufficient skill to unite in the evening classes, and these gave place to others equally destitute of information. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

Although the experiment was at first an overwhelming success, a number of factors put an end to it, and so before the year was over Mr.



Hastings decided to accept the post of choir director at the Bleeker Street Presbyterian Church.

Almost every year Mr. Hastings continued to publish some psalm-tune collection or hymnbook, often writing some new stanza for an old hymn or a new text he felt was needed or composing a tune under his own name, a nom de plume, or perhaps anonymously.

In 1832 he and Lowell Mason collaborated on *Spiritual Songs for Social Worship* which Henry Wilder Foote calls "the most important book which Mason produced. . . ."8 Notable among the inclusions in the book are "My faith looks up to Thee" to Mr. Mason's OLIVET and "Rock of Ages" to Mr. Hastings' TOPLADY, both for the first time in print.

*The Christian Psalmist* appeared in 1836. This was followed by the *Manhattan Collection* (1837) and the *Sacred Lyre* (1840). With William Bradbury, he published *The Psalmodist* (1844), *The Choralist* (1847), *The Mendelssohn Collection* (1849) and *The Psalmista* (1851).

A writer in *The Evangelist* says of Thomas Hastings, "I knew him in the late '50's as a Christian layman. He was at that time leading the choir of Dr. Hutton's Church, on Washington Square, New York, and teaching a Bible class of young men in the Sunday School. Mr. Hastings' tall form and face, almost buried in his Bible, eyes closely guarded with double glasses, his earnest manner, clear and forcible teaching, are vividly recalled. . . . I shall never forget the evening spent in his Amity Street home . . . and the fatherly way in which he received me, and his plain and simple exposition of the meaning of faith."<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Hastings' hymns were widely sung, including "Gently, Lord, O gently lead us," "How calm and beautiful the morn," "Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning," and "Return, O wand'rer, to thy rest." Among the most popular of his tunes were ORTONVILLE, TOPLADY and WESLEY.

When his *Dissertation* appeared in a new and enlarged edition in 1853, he wrote in the preface: "Well, thirty years have elapsed and the musical art in this country has advanced, to say the least, quite to the level of the *Dissertation*."

In 1854, another book by Thomas Hastings appeared called *The History of Forty Choirs*. With chapter titles ranging from "A Talented Good Man, But a Nervous Teacher" to "A Peep Behind the Curtain," this book consisted of a number of fictionalized case studies based on his own experience in the church music field. Frederic Louis Ritter calls the book "a faithful picture of the naïve, crude, childish and often ludicrous and would be 'smart' ways and manners of such persons as



were then connected with the musical affairs of the church. It is interspersed with his own teachings, counsels, and musico-religious reflections."<sup>10</sup>

In 1856 a new hymnbook appeared believed by some to be Mr. Hastings' best, *Selah*. New York University had conferred its first Doctor of Music on Lowell Mason in 1855; its second was conferred on Thomas Hastings in 1858.<sup>11</sup>

Thomas Hastings' son, The Reverend Thomas S. Hastings who was at one time President of Union Theological Seminary, said of his father, "He was a devout and earnest Christian, a hard student, and a resolute worker, not laying aside his pen until three days before his death."

He was not a great composer. His tunes—most of them now forgotten—have been described as undistinguished, often sentimental, sometimes rhythmically like a "rocking-chair," but the simplicity of his melodies helped them to fill a real need at a time when many other available tunes were virtually unsingable.

He was not a great poet. As Professor Bird writing in 1885 said in the *Julian Dictionary*, "Not one of his hymns is of the highest merit, but many of them have become popular and useful. . . ." These, too, filled a need, and certainly Mr. Hastings' remarkable knowledge of scripture shines through most of the texts he had written.

" . . . Childlike as he was in spirit, there was nevertheless in and about him a personal force, a depth of feeling, a clearness of conviction, a rigidity of purpose, a manly piety—and all so united, so tempered and refined that few could resist his influence."<sup>12</sup> So said a tribute written shortly after his death in New York on May 15, 1872 at the age of 88.

Not great as a poet or composer, perhaps Mr. Hastings' chief claim upon our interest today should be the way in which he helped lead the Protestant Americans of his day to an appreciation of the true and serious role of hymns and hymn tunes in worship.

As he quaintly put it in his own words a century ago, "The question whether the praises of Zion shall become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, or whether they shall be to the honor and glory of Zion's King is a truly momentous one."

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, Frank Johnson, *American Writers and Compilers of Sacred Music*. New York, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> From the Family Covenant, a copy of which belonged to the author's grandmother Mary Seymour Lee Bristol.

<sup>3</sup> Gott, Anna C. Hastings, *Family Record of Dr. Seth Hastings, Senior*. Rochester, N. Y., 1898.

<sup>4</sup> Metcalf, Frank Johnson. See note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Hastings, Thomas, *A Dissertation on Musical Taste*. Albany, N. Y., 1822.

<sup>6</sup> Randolph, Anson D. F., "Thomas Hastings," *The New York Evangelist*, November 21, 1872.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Foote, Henry Wilder, *Three Centuries of American Hymnody*. Harvard University Press, 1940.

<sup>9</sup> Gott, Anna C. Hastings, quoted in *Family Record of Dr. Seth Hastings, Senior*. Rochester, N. Y., 1898.

<sup>10</sup> Ritter, Frederic Louis, *Music in America*. New York, 1890.

<sup>11</sup> From a letter to the author from New York University, March 6, 1959.

<sup>12</sup> Randolph, Anson D. F. See note 6.

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### Among Our Contributors

SETH BINGHAM When invited to write an editorial for this issue, Dr. Bingham replied by sending us his hymn tune OGUNQUIT, which appears on the editorial page.

LEE HASTINGS BRISTOL, JR., HH.D., LITT.D., MUS.D., the author of the article on Thomas Hastings is a great-great-great-great nephew of the noted hymn writer and composer. In his home, Dr. Bristol owns Dr. Hastings' organ and the little desk at which he composed the tune TOPLADY to "Rock of Ages." Among Dr. Bristol's tunes which have appeared in THE HYMN are SOMERSET HILLS, OLDEN LANE, BAYHEAD and DICKINSON COLLEGE.

ARMIN HAEUSSLER, D.D., our Literary Consultant, was one of two American hymnologists invited to attend the International Conference for Hymnology, in Lüdenscheid, Westphalia, September 8 to 11. He addressed the Conference on special problems of hymnological research in the U.S.A.

RUTH E. MARSDEN has been Chairman of the Hymn Committee of the National Church Music Fellowship and is now Chairman of the Christian Education Committee. She has served on the staff of the Chicago Evangelistic Institute, University Park, Iowa.

MORGAN SIMMONS, M.S.M., is Organist and Choirmaster of The Presbyterian Church, Bound Brook, New Jersey.

JOHN UNDERWOOD STEPHENS, whose hymn "The God of Grace" has been set to music by Dr. Bingham, is a Presbyterian Minister, writer and poet. He is the author of "Lift up your eyes," one of the eleven hymns published by The Hymn Society of America for the Evanston Assembly, 1954.



# "Nonumque Prematur in Annum"

ARMIN HAEUSSLER

THIS WINGED WORD from *De Arte Poetica* (l. 388) by Horace points out a need which existed not only 2000 years ago, but one which is even more evident today. Horace was of the opinion that any creative work in the field of verse must be polished "until the ninth year" before being released to the reading public.

Reference works require much research, checking and rechecking. One can also make some serious mistakes in reviewing a book. Several years ago, Christopher Hill included this comment in a review of Christopher Dawson's *Dynamic of World History* which was published in *The Spectator*:

It is perhaps unfair to consider Christopher Dawson's posthumous work together with an anthology of pronouncements on history made by great historians from Voltaire to the present day. The late Mr. Dawson was not a great historian. . . .

In the subsequent issue of *The Spectator* the editor published a reply by Mr. Dawson under the rather facetious heading, "Manalive!" which began with this tart rejoinder:

Sir, my attention has just been drawn to the article in your current issue by Mr. Christopher Hill on "The Church, Marx, and History," in which he states that "the late Mr. Dawson was not a great historian." I do not wish to assert that I am "great," but I do most emphatically deny that I am "late."

Thus the review of Dr. Johannes Klein's *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik* in THE HYMN (Jan. 1959) needs to be corrected in several instances by its writer. This is necessary because the reviewer failed to follow his old habit of checking up by mail, rail, plane, long distance telephone, or otherwise on certain items on which he deemed it safe to "play a hunch" after an intensive search in many German and German-English dictionaries had proved fruitless. We felt that Dr. Klein had made up five new words when as a matter of fact that was true of only two of them: *dichtungsfähig* and *Spannungsfeld*. They, like the other words, *Gedankenlyrik*, *Seitentrieb* and *Kontrafaktur*, were not to be found in any of the following dictionaries: Campe, 1807-11; Adelung, 1808-11; Heinsius, 1818-22; Beer, 1827; Heyse, 1833, 1849; Grimm Brothers, 1854; Hoffman, W., 1861; Sanders, D., 1871; Grieb, 1873; Diefenbach-Wuelcker, 1885; Heyne, 1890, 1906; Fluegel, 1894; Fluegel-Tanger-Schmidt, 1907; James, 1909; Muret-Sanders, 1910; Schulz,

1913; Pinloche, 1922; Hoffmann-Block, 1936; Paul-Betz, 1956.

Since we had come to believe that German lexicographers did not miss any word current in their time as well as in the past, we thought it would not be necessary to write a lot of letters about these aforementioned five words. Now we repent in sackcloth and ashes, for we have discovered the following:

*Gedankenlyrik* appears in Wildhagen-Heraucourt, 1953, and in *Cassell's New German and English Dictionary*, 1958. It refers to a meditative type of poetry, applied to philosophical verse since the days of Schiller.

*Seitentrieb* is listed in the same two compilations. Meaning "side growth," Dr. Klein took this from the field of botany.

*Spannungsfeld* was used by Dr. Klein in a manner similar to Goethe's reference to *Polarität* (polarity), a term also going back to the field of natural science. As set forth in our review, it means an area or period of tension. The German technical dictionaries list more than two dozen compound words beginning with *Spannungs-*, but even such dictionaries as Albert Willy Meyer's *Chemical-Technical Dictionary* in German, English, French and Russian, 1942, and Maxim Newmark's *Dictionary of Science and Technology* in English, French, German and Spanish, 1943, do not include *Spannungsfeld*.

*Kontrafaktur* is from the Latin *contrafactum* which seems to have passed through a *samsara* of birth and rebirth, doing for some time a disappearing act as far as the English language is concerned. The Latin word is the past participle stem of *contrafacere*, to do against, to do the opposite of. *Contrafactum* was the term used to indicate the replacing of the original text of a vocal composition with a new one. It was a practice begun in the thirteenth century when religious texts supplanted secular ones or vice versa. Sometimes the latter substitution was referred to as a "parody mass." We ran across the word years ago when we discovered that the tune for "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" originally had been used for a love song, "Mein G'muet ist mir verwirret."

Apparently *contrafactum* appeared very rarely in Medieval English literature. Later, in 1682, Lithgow made this observation in his *Travels and Voyages through Europe, Asia, and Africa*, Vol. 4, p. 138:

The Turks have no bells . . . but they have high, round steeples, for they contrafact and contradict all the forms of Christians.

Blount's *Law Dictionary*, 1670, included the word *contrafaction*, defined as counterfeiting. In Murray's *New English Dictionary*, 1888, it



was still listed, but with the comment: obsolete. In other words, it was dead, but in recent years it has again come to life. It is not to be found in Oscar Thompson's *International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, 1943, nor in Maxim Newmark's *Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases*, 1950, nor in the 19 other works already referred to, but it is in Mackensen's *Neues deutsches Woerterbuch*, 1952, and in Willi Apel's *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 1951. Apparently the word has never been obsolete in Germany even though it has been harder to find than a white cat in a blizzard in any Germany dictionary. It finally got into Mackensen's lexicon and into *Der grosse Brockhaus*, the German equivalent of the *Britannica*, 1955. F. A. Heinrich made it the subject of his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Leipzig in 1911, writing on *Das Fortleben des aelteren Volksliedes im Kirchenlied des 17. Jahrhunderts* ("The continuation of the older folk song in the *Kirchenlied* of the 17th century"). A dissertation on a similar subject was written two years earlier by K. Hennig at the University of Koenigsberg.

We stated in our review our belief that the word *Bannkreis* was first used by Moeser more than 100 years ago and that it is practically obsolete today. Since publication of the review we have found it in Mackensen's dictionary and in Duden's *Rechtschreibung der deutschen Sprache*, 1948. (While preparing the review we used the facilities of two large university libraries, but we should have gone to several more in order to consult every German reference work ever written; Unfortunately we thought that the twenty and more which we used at the time would adequately cover the German vocabulary.)

What does the word *Bannkreis* mean? The first syllable, the *Bestimmungswort*, is derived from the verb *bannen* which has more than a dozen meanings, two of them contradictory. Every language has words conveying diametrically opposed meanings and the German is no exception. Originally *bannen* was strictly a legal term and meant to summon one to a court of justice. Eventually it had all of the many meanings of the Latin *edicere*, *interdicere*, *prohibere* and *expellere*. Then there were such additional meanings as: to exorcize (evil spirits); to bring in tax money; to conjure; to transfix; to reserve an area as a sanctuary for wild life. It could mean *verbannen*: to banish, to ostracize, to repel, and Goethe used it in that sense in his *Goetz von Berlichingen*.

In reading Dr. Klein's great work we felt that he had used the *bannen* in *Bannkreis* in the sense of *verbannen*, but we have since learned that this was incorrect. In describing the poetical developments during the Reformation period, the Baroque period, the age of Romanticism, and the age of Realism, he used the word to indicate that in each

of these periods all *Lyrik* was drawn into the *Bannkreis*—the magic circle—of each period. That did not mean, however, that the verse written then necessarily articulated the *Zeitgeist*, the dominant spirit of the time. In the Reformation period the *Kirchenlied* certainly gave poetic expression to its controlling spirit. The writing of hymnic verse gradually became more and more didactic and abstract, practically ceasing in the period described in Book III, the age of Rationalism and Pietism. Lyric and dramatic poetry finally came into its own in the period dealt with in Book IV, the period of tension created by "Sturm und Drang" versus Classicism. That was the age of Klopstock, Goethe, Schiller, and Hoelderlin. Dr. Klein maintains that the various periods in the history of the German *Lyrik* were not bounded by certain dates, but were subject to the *Bannkreis*, the magic sweep of unconfined intellectual and spiritual movements, and to the oftentimes severe tensions following in its wake.

In view of such completely unexpected developments we feel that we had better stick to the old tried and true procedure of writing letters, or calling by long distance telephone, or even making a special trip whenever there is some doubt about the meaning or significance of a word or phrase, the origin of some hymn text or hymn tune, or the correctness of certain biographical data. Latin may be a dead language to some folk, but to us Horace's counsel will henceforth be more alive than ever and serve as a constant admonition: "Nonumque prematur in annum."

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(continued from page 102)

This Conference at Ridgecrest each year is a part of the very active and worthy sacred music program which has been developed among the Southern Baptist Churches. The leaders in the movement are to be congratulated on its achievements and its future possibilities. Many another denomination would do well to ponder what the Southern Baptists are doing in sacred music. I myself was delighted to have this first hand contact with it.

Quite evidently I had a "memorable experience" at Ridgecrest!

—DEANE EDWARDS

## Change of Address

The office of The Hymn Society of America is now located at 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, N. Y.



# A Sane Approach to The Training of Children's Choirs

MORGAN SIMMONS

THE PEDESTRIAN HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY—that is the essence or the ethos of any sane approach to church music and choir training. This is not to say that the whims of the unthinking individual are to take precedence over the well wrought concepts of the choirmaster which evolve only after much mental and spiritual effort. There are certain “traffic regulations” which bind choir members, adults or children, to orderliness of thought and action. But it does mean that after all people have priority over the mechanics of programs and schedules. There must be a mutual respect between the driver and the pedestrian.

As impressive as any piece of church music may be on its own merit, it is, nevertheless, only a vehicle for the worship of God. God and the creature that he made in his own image are more important than all the church music that has ever been composed. Man is God's creation; music is man's. When the pre-eminence of God and the prominence of man have become fixed in the mind of the choir trainer, only then can he proceed with the task which he has set for himself. All the technical facility and musical know-how in existence are worthless to the church musician unless the awe of God and respect for his fellow man is ingrained in his thinking.

Respect for choristers is only part of the picture. It must be coupled to an understanding which seeks to know and appreciate the capabilities and potentialities of each choir member. Musical capabilities and potentialities are not the only facets of the personality with which the choirmaster must concern himself. He must set about to meet his colleagues on common ground. If a young person can trust an adult for the things which have relevance to his own experience, he will give himself wholeheartedly to any cause which that adult may champion, be it sports, religion or singing the praises of Almighty God. Harvey Grace admonishes us to think “of the chorister, not merely as an unusually troublesome kind of wind instrument, but as a ‘soaring human boy.’”<sup>1</sup>

And St. James reminds us that “faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” The philosophy which considers the love of people and the ability to discipline those people by precept and example remains primal in our thinking as faith does in our worship; but this philosophy exerts upon us the pressure of showing forth in our actions those things which we believe in our hearts.

There are certainly basic rudiments of education to be considered; for choir training is, without doubt, education. If the above concepts are really a part of us, the atmosphere for teaching can only be a healthy one. Teaching must be thought of not as a boon to the teacher's ego—a process in which the learner is expected to regurgitate the pet formulae of the teacher and thereby reflect the abilities of the teacher—but rather as a challenge to develop thoughtful individuals who are mentally and musically independent. This independence, however, must have pilings which are grounded on solid foundations. And how are these foundations laid except by rote teaching? Obviously much teaching, whether mathematics or music, is accomplished by this method. The words we learn by rote as children form the basis for the entire vocabulary for life. The importance of rote teaching in its broadest aspects cannot be overestimated. An English teacher has told me that no matter how many grammatical rules a bright student can repeat, his conversational grammar is still colored by what he has learned at home. It seems to me that this theory is applicable to choir training. If the young chorister admires his choir trainer, he will imitate everything that he does. If the musical abilities of this choir man are good, these musical qualities will be reflected in his choir. The reverse of this theory is equally true. If, however, the choir director has not only musical gifts to his credit but also the ability of instigating independence of thought in his singers, his choir will be superior.

The impressionable young mind is completely open to learning, like a dry sponge which soaks up water with amazing powers of absorption. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher or choirmaster to fill that mind with those things which have lasting value. The minds of children are perhaps one of our greatest untapped resources. Fortunately, both for children and adults, we have made progress in the right direction from the days when men were prompted to write such fare as *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*. The child, with adult leadership, can appreciate and absorb tremendous doses of serious "stuff." Furthermore, the young mind is responsive to the challenge that asks him to discipline his mind. Why should not the child sing Gibbons' "O Thou the central orb" instead of "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam."

Certainly it is sound thinking to regard our work with children as preparation for the future. The acceptance of this concept necessitates the best efforts we can give; but it should not hamper our explorations into the possibilities of the here and now. I am reminded of a Thomas Carlyle text which my six-through-eight-year-old choir sang, one whose simplicity made a tremendous impression on them and on me.

So here hath been dawning  
 Another blue day.  
 Think, wilt thou let it  
 Slip useless away?

Behold it aforetime  
 No eye ever did:  
 So soon it for ever  
 From all eyes is hid.

Out of eternity  
 This new day is born;  
 Into eternity,  
 At night, will return.

Here hath been dawning  
 Another blue day.  
 Think, wilt thou let it  
 Slip useless away?<sup>2</sup>

When we are confronted with this responsibility of doing our share to plant in these young minds elements which will serve them in the future as well as now, we are a bit frightened at the magnitude of our task; we are also humble and grateful for the opportunity which can be ours. It stretches our imaginations, our musicianship and our faith.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Organist*. London, The Richards Press, 1920. p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Songs of Praise*, Enlarged Edition. London, Oxford University Press, 1932. Hymn #34.

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“Thou Son of God, whose love sustains”

MORGAN SIMMONS

Thou Son of God, whose love sustains  
 Our selfish wills, our finite ways,  
 Empower us with thy spirit's grace  
 To know the truth thy law conveys.

Thou Son of Man, whose soul did know  
 The stress of life, the tempter's voice,  
 O hear our prayer for strength to face  
 The daily task of human choice.

Thou Lord of Lords and King of Kings,  
 Accept our thanks for blessings past;  
 Confirm our weakness, smite our pride,  
 Remold our lives in nobler cast. Amen.

Note: This hymn was written to accompany a sermon topic on resisting the evils of the present age.



# A Hymn Memory Plan

RUTH E. MARSDEN

THE WORDS "HYMN MEMORY" suggest a new thought. The words "Scripture Memory" do not seem strange to our ears. We may thank our parents and teachers for their earnestness in teaching us the passages from the Bible, but our hymns we seem to be responsible for learning "on our own," as it were. Some of them we learn from repetition in the services of the church, but often we are left to chance selections of music, and some of the choice hymns are overlooked.

A Hymn Memory Plan was suggested by Earl Hulin, the president of the National Church Music Fellowship, in 1956. When he communicated his idea to a committee in the form of a directive, he found that the chairman had a complete plan worked out, ready to put into operation. So in Chicago and in Los Angeles at the same time the plan was suggested. In such wide areas is the working of the Holy Spirit prompting and directing the work of the servants of the living God.

Research and correspondence proved that persons in other areas had similar ideas. At that time only one denominational group apparently was sponsoring a Hymn Memory program, the Covenant Church which published a leaflet called "Songs for Chic," (Covenant High Congress). This included hymns such as the following: "All hail the power of Jesus' name," "Sing the glad carol of Jesus our Lord," "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?," "Am I a soldier of the cross?," the total being ten hymns in number, according to the Reverend Aaron Markuson, a youth leader in the Covenant Church.

In this way his group had greatly strengthened their love for hymns, and also proved that hymn memorization is not confined to the United States alone. Making a tour of Europe with almost 100 young people, the Reverend Mr. Markuson writes that they heard a congregation of over 3,000 German Christians sing *from memory* one great hymn after another. He describes this as a great experience, convincing one firmly of the value of memorizing the hymns of the church. Said he, "It was good to notice also how many hymns our young people knew from memory." In fact, he stated that the young people themselves were surprised.

In the report to the National Church Music Fellowship on the subject of Hymn Memory, the following quotation was used from THE HYMN, April, 1956, page 66: "The congregation of the Grace Covenant Church, Richmond, Virginia, (William H. Schutt, Organist), was asked to *memorize* a hymn every month."

Wilbur Nelson, a radio singer of Huntington Park, California,

claims to have memorized several thousand hymns and gospel songs.

From another part of the world comes a report of the value of learning hymns. From the pen of William R. Read in Brazil and published in the *Bible Meditation Leaguer*, December, 1955, is this heartening report of the result of a Daily Vacation Bible School and the work of a young evangelist: The people "have practically paid for their small but adequate place for worship; they have passed through the persecution stage; they have had 60 classes to prepare them to make profession of faith; they have *memorized 25 hymns and countless verses of Scripture.*" So in various parts of the world the hymns are finding their place.

If we are laboring under the impression that Hymn Memorization is a new idea, we have but to look at a statement by Bishop Henry White Warren which appears in his collection, *Fifty-Two Memory Hymns* (N. Y. Eaton & Maine, 1907).

In 1903 thousands of persons sent me their pledge to learn a hymn to be published in the papers once a fortnight. Having crossed the wide Pacific, and going into Manila in October of that year, a steam yacht put off to meet us. The crowd on board was dressed in white, and we wondered who they could be, till they struck up the memory hymn of the week:

‘There’s a wideness in God’s mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea.’

In Manila I heard 1,700 Christians sing, like the voice of many waters, in a general Love Feast. They had but thirty-six hymns translated into their language, but they knew them all. Thirty-six hymns known are better than a thousand not known.

The number of hymns chosen is significant, one hymn for each week of the year. The title page reads:

FIFTY-TWO MEMORY HYMNS  
TO  
ENRICH DICTION  
ENLARGE THOUGHT  
STRENGTHEN MEMORY  
GIVE WINGS TO FAITH  
INCUPLICATE DOCTRINE AND DUTY  
AND TUNE LIFE TO SWEET MELODIES  
SET TO LOFTIEST SONGS.

selected by  
Bishop Henry White Warren

Bishop Warren was specific also as to his method of learning a hymn:

Learn a verse or two every day. Compel the memory to grasp and retain the whole stanza with one reading.

His hymns for memorization are well chosen, and one wonders if the volume is not well worth re-publication. Hymns are selected from representative authors: Ray Palmer, Augustus Toplady, Philip Doddridge, Frederick Faber, and the omnipresent Watts and Wesley. Some rare stanzas, nevertheless, are to be found, which have been omitted from some hymnals, stanzas with both beauty and spiritual insight. The following are representative of the types of hymns selected:

Give tongues of fire and hearts of love—James Montgomery  
O Love Divine, what hast Thou done!—Charles Wesley  
Strong Son of God, immortal Love—Alfred Tennyson

The hymns are arranged in a definite order, and give a "System of theology, the plan of salvation, the expression of a perfect faith, a guide for life and a glimpse of glory."

The next question obviously in a study such as this is always, "Why?" "Why memorize hymns when they can be sung effectively from a hymnal?" Observation of many groups of young people proves that they sing that which is familiar. Herein lies in part the success of the gospel chorus, and the gospel song. The same groups of students in a controlled experiment, sing spontaneously the hymns of which they have memorized several stanzas, whereas formerly they sang only "choruses" and gospel songs with their continuous repetitious phrases.

One of the great values is the improvement of taste in music. *The hymn becomes a norm by which every other sacred selection is judged.* In the word "hymn" we are not including gospel songs, but are designating the latter as being a different type of song, namely a folksong, with an entirely different purpose. The students of hymnody are familiar with the character of a hymn and can define it. Where the hymn is used for worship, the worship remains dignified and worthy. Where gospel songs are admitted, the services tend to deteriorate, with the exception of a hybrid form of song and hymn, of which the purpose is "teaching."

The greatest value in the hymn is neither musical nor literary, but spiritual. We recall with sympathy the case of an elderly woman whose sight and hearing had failed, who knew neither Bible passages nor hymns, as she sat in a rocking chair rocking her life away in her mountain home, awaiting her death.



Even in life there are hours when a hymn can bring great comfort or joy. A young woman recalled an experience of facing surgery, practically alone in New York City, when the hymn "Fairest Lord Jesus" came to mind with the assurance that the "Ruler of all nature" could adequately care for the frail human body. On awaking from anaesthesia, again it was a hymn that brought confidence:

Jesus, I am resting, resting  
In the joy of what Thou art!  
I am finding out the greatness  
Of Thy loving heart.

Not to the author alone are the words of a hymn living and vital, but to the singer as well. Again at the bedside of a loved one who was crossing into his eternal reward, a hymn brought stability and solace:

The great Physician now is near,  
The sympathizing Jesus.  
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer;  
Oh hear the voice of Jesus.

With this thought came the assurance that the Great Physician was giving eternal healing to one who is "Putting on immortality," of which all healing is but a foretaste. The value of our hymns is not confined to the sanctuary, but is evident in every-day living.

In the church that intangible condition of spiritual awareness which we call revival has always travelled on the wings of sacred song, the songs of Wesley, Watts, the Welsh Hymns, the gospel songs of Ira D. Sankey and of Dr. A. B. Simpson in the gay nineties.

If the singing of hymns is so important how then can the average person learn the great sacred music of the church? The memorization of hymns may be accomplished by voluntary effort, either on the part of the person learning the hymn, or of some interested sponsor; or it may be accomplished by repetition or simply by hearing.

As a child of three I could sing the hymn "O could I speak the matchless worth." Now that is not an easy hymn to sing. In fact, it is on the "difficult" list for piano and organ students because its rhythm is considered (by their earnest souls) "tricky." Yet my mother had to restrain her three-year-old from joining too lustily with the congregation in the singing of the hymn. Why?

She did not "teach" me the song. I learned it by hearing her sing it. It was *her favorite hymn*, and I somehow caught her enthusiasm. Was the meaning clear? No! Nor is it yet. Nor will it be until the "delightful day shall come, When my dear Lord shall call me home, Triumphant

in His grace!" I cannot yet "sing the characters He bears, and all the forms of love He wears," but I can sing the hymn with enjoyment.

The National Church Music Fellowship has suggested a definite plan for Hymn Memorization. (See *Your Hymn Memory List* issued by the NCMF, 1956) One can begin with the easiest and best known hymns. Because both adults and children may sing hymns, the familiar ones are suggested for any age. The Hymn Memory Plan is workable in every department of the Church School.

The easiest list includes the "Doxology," "Onward Christian soldiers," "America," Christmas carols, and other easy hymns. The lists are progressive. They are also non-sectarian and undenominational so that the list may be used in general. The songs for college age seem difficult, almost at the level for choral singers, but if the lists have been followed faithfully, there is readiness for songs more difficult musically, and with deeper spiritual significance.

There are lists also for the pre-school child, and for the primary age, six to nine. There are also suggested selections for the family altar.

There is a time (paraphrasing Solomon) to learn hymns and a time not to learn hymns. A church may plan opportunities for teaching them; then the singing of the hymns in the services will be a more pleasurable experience.

There is no more rewarding experience than having a student express appreciation to a teacher. One leader in Christian Education had the joy of receiving a letter from a husky Marine at Guadalcanal in the difficult and dangerous days of 1944 saying that the hymn he had learned stayed with him.

To an excellent instructor in piano and organ many a person owes his appreciation of hymns. There is much instrumental and choral music from the masters based on the hymn tunes. While we are primarily concerned with the text of the hymn in this study, it is obvious that the contemporary music of the church would be greatly enriched through increased familiarity with great hymn tunes as well as texts.

Evangelical Christianity has been called a Laymen's Movement. While this is not entirely true, yet the layman has an important part. The choice of hymns and songs is an important part in the work of the church, yet it is too often done without consideration of value. So, many of the excellent, worthy beautiful hymns, like undiscovered treasures, lie buried.

A statement made in a college chapel service remains in the memory, though the author's name is not known—"Songs leave us on the earth, but a hymn lifts us up to God."

## Christmas Recordings

JAMES BOERINGER

CHRISTMAS HYMNS AND CAROLS, Vol. I (twenty-four hymns and carols). Robert Shaw (Conductor); *Victor* LM-2139.

One side of this release is devoted to carols of the sort congregations sing easily, the other to those commonly reserved for choirs. In documenting hymns on records, this reviewer feels that there is a definite place for two kinds of performances: first, the singing of a well-trained choir that can, under the shaping hands of a fine conductor, bring deep musical understanding and perfect virtuoso control to this music; second, the ordinary singing of a plain congregation, which balances a rough "performance" and a straightforward "interpretation" (congregations, of course, actually neither perform nor interpret as a group) with an inimitable sincerity of purpose and wholesomeness of spirit. Shaw, of course, represents the first of these two, for he brings indescribable intensity and expressiveness to the music without ever losing touch with its essential simplicity. The works presented are "O come, all ye faithful," "The first nowell," "O little town of Bethlehem," "O come, O come, Emmanuel," "Away in a manger," "Silent night," "Joy to the world," "It came upon a midnight clear," "Angels we have heard on high," "While by my sheep I watched at night," "Lo, how a rose e'er blooming" (Praetorius), "Hark, the herald angels sing," "My dancing day," "I wonder as I wander,"

"Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella," "Willy, take your little drum" (Patapan), "We three kings of orient are," "The Coventry Carol," "I sing of a maiden," "Go, tell it on the mountain," "Hark! how the bells" ("Carol of the bells," Wilhousky-Leontovitch), "Wassail Song," "Deck the halls with boughs of holly." The notes say the melody of "Joy to the world" is "attributed to Handel." It is, of course, arranged from two parts of *The Messiah*, the chorus "Glory to God" and the string accompaniment to the tenor recitative "Comfort ye."

CHRISTMAS HYMNS AND CAROLS, Vol. II (twenty-four hymns and carols, one motet). Robert Shaw (Conductor); *Victor* LM-1722.

The second volume delves more deeply than its predecessor into Christmas folk music and composed music. There is wisdom in so doing. Though Shaw and his fourteen singers have a remarkable capacity to seize upon a style and convey it perfectly, we are left after a program of hymns and carols with a desire for a change of pace. To hear a hymn or carol is almost to participate actively in it, so strongly does one consider it music for all to sing; the rarer simple pieces and the composed pieces afford one instead the quieter participation of an auditor. The performance is, as we would expect, impeccable, the understanding deep and well-communicated. The pieces presented are "I saw three ships," "O Tannenbaum," "Allon, gay, gay, gay, bergeres"



(Guillaume Costeley, 1531-1606), "The holly and the ivy," four Spanish carols, "The Cherry Tree Carol," "Mary had a baby," "So blest a sight it was to see," "How unto Bethlehem this pilgrimage of kings?," "A Virgin unspotted" (William Billings), "Good King Wenselas," "The Boar's Head Carol," "Christ was born on Christmas," "How far is it to Bethlehem?," "March of the Kings," "Here, 'mid the ass and oxen," "Touro-louro-louro," "Carol of the Birds," "O magnum mysterium" (Tomas Luis de Victoria, 1548-1611), "What Child is this who, laid to rest," "Masters in this hall," "Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light" (Bach). Mr. Shaw states on the jacket: "In the arrangement of the carols for chorus we have sought constantly to avoid intruding upon their simplicity and poignancy. It has been our hope to safeguard their spirit, whether rollicking or tender, by refraining from harmonizations foreign to their nature, from 'commercial' sonorities, and from 'choral effects.' Those which seemed by narrative pattern or melodic range more natural to the solo storyteller, we have allotted to a single voice, at the same time striving to form a subdued accompaniment pattern which might in the familiar fireside situation seem 'improvised' by the chorus of listeners. For all concerned it has been a work of affection, pleasure and friendship."

CHRISTMAS IN ENGLAND—Carol Service in a Country Church (fourteen carols); *Victor* LPM-1568.

There are, as we have observed

in our review of Robert Shaw's records, two kinds of possible hymn- and carol-performances: a technically flawless one by highly-trained musicians or a spiritually flawless one by ordinary faithful people. It would appear that the latter kind is more appropriate: hymns and carols are of course primarily congregational, not choral, music. This record, which begins with church bells and flanks the hymns and carols with jumbled but pleasing organ music, wishes to create a simple devotional mood, to carry the listener, as it were, to an English country church. It succeeds remarkably well. The cover, however, looks like a mediocre Christmas card and the notes, which are utterly pointless, apparently cannot for some technical reason identify the church or the performers. It would lend a sense of reality to the service if we knew whom we were hearing, even if we had never heard the names before. But we suppose that what's on the jacket is of much less importance than what's on the record; and that is a veracious, lovely, and deeply satisfying performance by congregation, choirs, and soloists of the following: "O come, all ye faithful," "As with gladness men of old," "Once in royal David's city," "The holly and the ivy," "Joy to the world," "The first noel," Good king Wenceslas," "Hark! the herald angels sing," "Angels from the realms of glory," "Away in a manger," "While shepherds watched their flocks by night," "The Coventry Carol," "I saw three ships," and "Silent night, holy night."

THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS (eight hymns and carols, one motet, one anthem); The choir of Old St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, Maryland. Rev. Eugene Walsh, S.S. (Choirmaster), James M. Burns (Organist), Edward Mitchell (Narrator); Boston Records B-600, 10".

Selections from John W. Lynch's poem, "A Woman Wrapped in Silence," are used to unite the hymns which are appealingly sung by the male choir of seminarians in the Chapel of St. Mary's in Baltimore. The pieces performed are "All hail, eternal Child," "O come, O come, Emmanuel," "Salve, Maria" (motet), "O little town of Bethlehem," "Lo, how a rose e'er blooming," "... a voice from heaven cries" (initial words unintelligible), "Angels we have heard on high," "Gesu bambino" (Pietro Yon: badly performed), "Silent night," and "O come, all ye faithful." Our main criticism, again, is directed against a lack of texts and information. The jacket art-work is tasteful here and the engineering of the sound quite fine; why cannot record companies go one step further and provide full texts and adequate notes on sources and arrangements? In all other respects this is an extremely pleasing release.

### Acknowledgment

We acknowledge with thanks the courtesy of the Sue Page Studio of Wellesley, Mass., for permission to publish the picture of Katharine Lee Bates in THE HYMN, April, 1959.

### Reviews

*American Unitarian Hymn Writers and Hymns*; compiled by Henry Wilder Foote for The Hymn Society of America for publication in the Society's proposed *Dictionary of American Hymnology*. Cambridge, Mass., January, 1959. 270 pp. Obtainable from The Hymn Society, 475 Riverside Dr., New York 27. \$2.

*Catalogue of American Universalist Hymn Writers and Hymns*; compiled for The Hymn Society of America for the proposed *Dictionary of American Hymnology* by Henry Wilder Foote. Cambridge, Mass., January, 1959. 35 pp. Obtainable from The Hymn Society, 475 Riverside Dr., New York 27. \$1.

In 1940, The Reverend Dr. Henry Wilder Foote of Harvard's Divinity School published a definitive work entitled *Three Centuries of American Hymnody*. Two years earlier, he had been named the chairman of a committee of The Hymn Society of America to collaborate with the English editor of a projected revision of Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*. After war-time interruptions, this committee was reorganized and has made modest progress toward the compilation of an exhaustive *Dictionary of American Hymnology*. Plans call for a general index of all American hymnals, biographical sketches of each American hymn writer, and essays tracing the hymnody of each denomination in North America, each written by a scholar who has specialized

in the subject of his essay. In the five years since these plans were first made, Dr. Foote has worked steadily in his own denominational field and has now issued the results in the above titles.

Compiled with meticulous care for both detail and accuracy, each catalog has a historical introduction, an annotated list of the denominational hymnals, biographical sketches of their hymn writers, and lists of each authors hymns with notes. Well organized, these two works are invaluable reference tools for scholars working in this field. Congratulations on two significant catalogs from an industrious octogenarian!

—LEONARD ELLINWOOD

*The Plainsong Setting of the Service*, published by various Lutheran Publishing Houses, among them Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 40 pp. 50 cents or less according to number bought.

The recently published *Lutheran Service Book and Hymnal*, 1958, included only two settings of the Service. A third was planned but since it could not be included because of limitations of space, it was decided to publish it in a separate brochure. A large part of the third setting is based on the ancient plainsong melody, the *Orbis Factor*, known in the Solesmes books as Mass XI. These and the other melodies are simple. The second petition of the *Kyrie* contains one of the simplest but most pleading melodies in the plainsong repertoire. The fourth mode melody, or, as generally designated, the first melody for

the Creed is included. A number of Proper Prefaces for the Day or Season are appended. The melodies are fittingly harmonized with the rhythmic groupings marked as of the present day generally accepted practical theories and the format is similar to that of the *Hymnal* with the page as clear and readable.

—J. VINCENT HIGGINSON

*More Songs and Carols for Children* by William Grime, New York, Carl Fischer, Inc., 1959. \$1.00.

In this compilation the church musicians will find a wealth of suitable songs for use with childrens' choirs upon every occasion of the church year. The categories include: Christmas Carols, Jesus Growing Up, Lent and Palm Sunday, Easter Day, Teachings of Jesus, Hymns of Praise and Prayer, and Finding God Through Nature. The volume, which contains sixty-one separate selections, is beautifully illustrated by Don Kelly, Lew Lawrence, Charles Steele and William Travis.

Coming from the pen of a renowned minister who is himself a dedicated musician, these songs and carols reflect his love for children and his respect for stately church music. The combination of these attributes has influenced the writer in achieving a message within the understanding of children set to music of simplicity and dignity. While singing them the child is sure to experience a sense of joy for the blessings of his heavenly father and a desire to express this joy in a life of obedience and service.

William Grime is a radiant Christian who has given a lifetime to the



service of his fellowmen. On September 19, 1958, upon his retirement as Rector of Saint Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church in Great Neck, New York, he was honored by receiving at the hands of Bishop James P. DeWolfe, the Distinguished Service Cross of the Diocese of Long Island. At the same time he was made Rector Emeritus of Saint Paul's. In addition to his writing, Mr. Grime lectures at music conferences all over the country.

—RUTH NININGER

*The Children's Choir*, Ruth Krehbiel Jacobs. Augustana Press, Rock Island, Illinois, 1958. \$4.95.

The very phrase "children's choir" can begin a heated discussion in almost any group of church musicians. However, because the majority of church musicians not only approve of, but are enthusiastic about the importance of children's choir work as a means of growth in religious education, we shall review this book with them in mind. (The other group have no doubt stopped reading by now anyhow—too bad, for Mrs. Jacobs' book might convert them!)

Mrs. Jacobs has collected the choice materials that have been published in the *Choristers' Guild Letters* during the last ten years, and the subjects range from organizational suggestions and service plans, to an excellent outline for a nine month study plan for developing musicianship in primary choirs. The chapter on materials gives generous lists of anthems, collections, services, books, hymnals, records and audio-visual aids.

For the large number of choir directors whose activities have "just grewed" in the choir field, this book will be especially helpful; for through it runs an encouraging motif of "Don't give up. It can be done. We'll help you." Through the last ten years the Choristers' Guild has been doing just that.

The book is rather loosely organized, and even within chapters the reader is almost pelted with miscellaneous projects, plans, anecdotes, words of encouragement, and moral precepts. Such a format—no doubt a result of compiling material from monthly letters to Choristers' Guild members—precludes smooth reading from beginning to end. The book might have been called "1001 Suggestions for Choir Directors." Nevertheless, it is interesting reading throughout, and we heartily recommend it for each person in your church who is expressly concerned with music or children. Ideally, the minister, choir directors, organists and pianists, Sunday School teachers, and members of the Music Committee should read such a book, and initial the sections which seem to be applicable to the individual church needs. I think the result would be a rewarding surge of interest in your own Children's Choir.

—ALISON DEMAREST

*How to Build a Church Choir*, Charles Huddleston Heaton, Bethany Press, 1958. 63 pp.

On the assumption that "there is really slight difference between building the choir of the small

church and the choir of the large church," Dr. Heaton considers practical ways and means of "enlarging the choirs of churches of any size." Among the topics discussed are: The purpose of the church choir; Methods of attracting new members to the choir; Rules for choir membership; The choir room; The rehearsal procedure; Emotional and psychological problems of choir members; Recognition of the choir; When to sing. "This book does not purport to deal with the problems of intonation, blend, musicianship or the selection of worthy sacred music." But, rather, the author deals with down-to-earth matters

which may perplex the choir director with or without professional musical competence. Chapter five, "The Rehearsal Procedure," should be stimulating material for even the most experienced choral conductor. This little book should prove highly valuable to any in the field of church music looking for suggestions regarding the smooth functioning of a choral program. It evoked an enthusiastic response on the part of one member of my introductory class in church music (Eureka College), who was trying to get a choir started in his own small church.

—GEORGE BRANDON

## The Hymn Reporter

*Music Ministry*, a new monthly magazine for all persons in local churches who are concerned about music, will be launched in October by The Methodist Church through its Board of Education and The Methodist Publishing House. It will be closely related to the interest of the National Fellowship of Methodist Musicians.

Editor of the magazine is the Rev. V. Earle Copes, church organist and composer and former church and college choir director, and college professor. Mr. Copes is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York City from which he holds the B.D. and M.S.M. degrees and has done additional graduate study at the University of Texas. He is widely recognized as an organ recitalist. He has served on the Com-

mittee on Church Music for the Music Teacher's National Association and is a member of the American Guild of Organists and of the Committee on Music of the National Council of Churches.

The new magazine will carry articles for adult choir directors, organists, pianists, directors of youth and children's choirs, and church school teachers who wish to use music to greater advantage with their curriculum materials. A special music supplement will carry each month actual sample music selected from the catalogs of many publishers and also original music written by outstanding composers. Subscription, \$3 per year.

—Walter N. Vernon, Jr.

Editor, General Publications

*Spanish Hymnals* A list of hymnals used in the Protestant Churches in Mexico has been furnished at the request of the Editors, by Mrs. Eduardo Guerra (Laeta Guerra), as follows: *El Himnario*, Sociedad Americana de Tratados, 21 W. 46 St., N.Y.C. American Tract Society, copyright, 1931. *El Himnario Evangelico*, Soc. Americana de Tratados; American Tract Society, 1895. *El Nuevo Himnario Evangelico*, Soc. Americana de Tratados; American Tract Society, 1914. *El Nuevo Himnario Popular*, Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, El Paso, Texas. Copyright, 1955. *Himnos de la Vida Christiana*, Alianza Cristiana y Misionera, 260 W. 44 St., N.Y.C. Christian and Missionary Alliance, copyright, 1939. *Himnario Metodista*, Methodist Building, 535 Bändera Road, San Antonio 1, Texas, 1955. *Himnos Selectos*, arreglados por Vincente Mendoza, Casa Unida de Publicaciones, Apartado 97 Bis, Mexico DF, copyright, 1952. The Reverend Eduardo Guerra has served the Congregational Church in Guadalajara as Minister; Mrs. Guerra as Organist and Choir Director.

A "Welcome to America" luncheon for the Ambassadors Quartet from Southern Rhodesia was held July 16 at Midston House, N.Y.C. The Ambassadors Quartet is composed of four young African Methodist laymen from Southern Rhodesia, who will be making a concert tour through 29 states and the District of Columbia ending April 1960. The tour is sponsored by the Rhodesia Annual Conference of the

Methodist Church and the Methodist Board of Missions. The quartet is coming at this time because of the interdenominational Protestant mission study on Africa during 1959-60. The climax of the tour will be an appearance at the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Denver, Colorado, April, 1960.

The Quartet presented a brief program featuring the African folk and religious music which they will sing before American audiences throughout the nation. A significant part of this very attractive program consisted of two sacred songs adapted from native African musical sources: *Uyai O Wanhú Wese*, a Christian rallying song from a tribal battle song; and *Pamberi Masojah*, "Go forward, Christian," from a traditional African song. The future hymnody of the missionary enterprise throughout the world must rely increasingly upon native inspiration rather than the transfer of western hymns, especially of the Gospel Song type. The Editors of *The Hymn* congratulate these Rhodesian singers and commend them to the hospitality of members of The Hymn society.

A *Pageant of Church Music* was a feature of The Methodist Conference held at Central Hall, Bristol, England, in July of this year. We are indebted to The Reverend Bert Wright of Huddersfield for the program of the festival service. The Reverend Dr. E. Benson Perkins, M.A. presided with Frank R. Bishop, L.R.A.M., Choirmaster and Kenneth Barrett, Organist. This fine festival should be noted side by side



with the distinguished programs which have marked the progress of the hymn festival movement in the United States during the last twelve months. A wide range of hymn texts and tunes; and anthem music including the work of contemporary composers, was offered. As the festival was an evening service, the mood of Evensong pervaded the whole—an offering of praise and rejoicing in the spirit of Charles Wesley's great hymn, "Lift up your heart, lift up your voice; Rejoice; again I say, rejoice."

*The Katharine Lee Bates Centennial* was celebrated under the auspices of the Falmouth Historical Society at Falmouth, Massachusetts, where the poet was born, August 12, 1859, and where she was buried. The program opened at the Oak Grove Cemetery, continued at the Memorial Auditorium, and was followed by a series of events of local interest. The August 1, 1959, issue of *The Falmouth Enterprise* included a special Centenary section with many rare pictures and unusual items referring to Miss Bates' personal life and public career, together with several of her poems. A copy of the program and supplement which have been contributed by the Reverend George L. Knight who attended the celebration, will be placed in the files of The Hymn Society.

*A Hymn-Playing Class* has been conducted by the Columbia Drive Baptist Church of Decatur, Georgia, under the direction of Eugene Knotts, Minister of Music. Mr.

Knotts reports "Our Hymn-Playing Class has proven most valuable to in the development of pianists for our various Sunday School departments, but most of all we are gradually changing the tastes of our people to a richer experience in hymn singing. Last year nine young people completed our year of training in hymn playing." A fine service of worship built around hymns of Adoration, Humiliation of Self, Purification and Consecration, in which the group members participated, concluded the course.

*A Hymn of the Enlistment* is a feature of the work of the Peachtree Christian Church, Atlanta, Georgia. The Reverend Theodore W. Ripper, Minister of Music, reports "Each September we use as the Hymn of the Month the Hymn of Enlistment. This year our Enlistment Hymn was written by two of our members in response to an invitation issued by the Enlistment Planning Committee for new hymns on the theme 'Seek First the Kingdom of God.' The official hymn is a combination of two poems submitted. Though this is not the usual method of obtaining a hymn of great merit, this time this pooling of resources has produced a hymn of fine character and great strength, opening 'We're seeking first the Kingdom.'"

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# The Hymn

VOLUME 10, 1959

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Articles</i>	<i>Page</i>
Batchelder, Robert C., <i>Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958</i> . . . . .	87
Bristol, Lee Hastings, Jr., <i>Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872</i> . . . . .	105
Haeussler, Armin, <i>The Development of German Hymnody as Presented by Johannes Klein</i> . . . . .	5
———, "Nonumque Prematur in Annum" . . . . .	111
Harjunpaa, Toivo, <i>Notes on the Finnish Material in the Hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America</i> . . . . .	81
Hedges, Gerald E., <i>The Selection of Music</i> . . . . .	45
Johe, Edward H., <i>Hymn-Anthem and Prelude Literature</i> . . . . .	22, 97
Knickel, David A., <i>Hymn Festivals U.S.A.</i> . . . .	91
Knight, George L., William W. Reid, Jr., Gerald E. Hedges, <i>Symposium: The Funeral Service and Hymns</i> . . . . .	39
McConnell, H. Cecil, <i>Spanish Hymn Society in Embryo</i> . . . . .	53
Marlatt, Earl, <i>A Hymn is Born</i> . . . . .	37
Marsden, Ruth E., <i>A Hymn Memory Plan</i> . . . . .	118
Messenger, Ruth E., <i>William Walker Rockwell, 1874-1958</i> . . . . .	13
Miller, Edward O., <i>Hymns in Aid of Worship</i> . . . . .	79
Reid, William W., Jr., <i>The Hymns of Oliver Wendell Holmes</i> . . . . .	69
———, <i>The Selection of Hymn Texts</i> . . . . .	40
Schroeder, Edward A., "I Will Sing With Knowledge" . . . . .	49
Simmons, Morgan, <i>A Sane Approach to the Training of Children's Choirs</i> . . . . .	115
 <i>Hymns</i>	
Boeringer, James, "O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, hear" . . . . .	64
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, "Lord of all being" . . . . .	73
Simmons, Morgan, "Thou Son of God whose love sustains" . . . . .	117
Stephens, John Underwood, "The God of Grace" . . . . .	104
Watts, Isaac, "He dies, the Friend of Sinners dies" . . . . .	4
 <i>Tunes</i>	
Bingham, Seth, OGUNQUIT . . . . .	104
Boeringer, James, COKE-JEPHCOTT . . . . .	64
Bristol, Lee Hastings, Jr., DICKINSON COLLEGE . . . . .	73
SALEM, harmonized by Louise McAllister . . . . .	4

## Reviews

Page

<i>African Methodist Episcopal Zion Hymnal</i> , Zion Publishing House (George L. Knight) .....	99
<i>American Unitarian Hymn Writers and Hymns</i> , compiled by Henry Wilder Foote (Leonard Ellinworth) .....	125
<i>Canyon Hymnal for Boys and Girls</i> , Canyon Press (Madeline D. Ingram) .....	31
<i>Catalogue of American Universalist Hymn Writers and Hymns</i> , compiled by Henry Wilder Foote (Leonard Ellinwood) ....	125
Heaton, Charles H., <i>How to Build a Church Choir</i> (George Brandon) .....	127
<i>Hymns in Periodical Literature</i> (Ruth E. Messenger) .....	25, 95
Jacobs, Ruth Krehbiel, <i>The Children's Choir</i> (Alison Demarest) ..	127
<i>More Songs and Carols for Children</i> , William Grime (Ruth Nininger) .....	126
Morsch, Vivian S., <i>The Use of Music in Christian Education</i> (Alison Demarest) .....	99
<i>Pilgrim Hymnal</i> , Pilgrim Press (Morgan P. Noyes) .....	56
<i>Plainsong Setting of the Service</i> (Lutheran), Muhlenberg Press (J. Vincent Higginson) .....	126
Routley, Erik, <i>The Music of Christian Hymnody</i> (Leon Carson) ..	29
<i>The Baptist Hymnal</i> , Convention Press (Deane Edwards) ....	31
<i>The Hymnal</i> , Evangelical United Brethren Church, Evangelical Press and Otterbein Press (Gustav A. Lehmann) .....	59

## Miscellaneous

Boeringer, James, <i>Hymn Recordings</i> .....	62, 123
<i>Glossary of Terms Relating to Hymnody and Church Music</i> ..	15
<i>The Hymn Reporter</i> .....	60, 128

## Editorials

Johe, Edward H., <i>The Church Arts</i> .....	36
Knight, George L., <i>The Decennial Year</i> .....	2
Watters, Philip S. and Edith Holden, <i>Resignation of George Litch Knight</i> .....	68

## President's Message

Edwards, Deane, <i>A Memorable Experience</i> .....	102
———, <i>John Foster Dulles and Hymns</i> .....	66
———, <i>The Forward Fund</i> .....	34